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Conscientious Obedience to G O V E R N O R S
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S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D B E F O R E

The U N I V E R S I T Y of O X F O R D,

On T U E S D A Y *June* 22, 1756.

B E I N G

The A N N I V E R S A R Y of his M A J E S T Y's happy
Accession to the Throne.

By RICHARD GREEN, D.D. Fellow of St. *John Baptist*
College, *Oxford*,

Rector of *Belbroughton, Worcestershire*,

And Chaplain to the Right Reverend the LORD BISHOP
of W O R C E S T E R.

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ROM. xiii. 5.

*Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath,
but also for conscience sake.*

THAT our gracious Creator designed men for as much temporal happiness, as they are capable of consistently with their eternal interest, seems evident amongst other considerations from the inexhaustible variety of good things, with which he has furnished this lower place of their abode ; and for this end he has formed them for society, and made government necessary.

Among beings pure and perfect and impeccable, an equality perhaps might be possible, and they might want no other governor than the adorable Sovereign of the universe ; but this is a bare supposition. According to the best notions, we can form either from reason or scripture, concerning spiritual beings, (of whose nature, as it little concerns us, the divine wisdom hath thought proper to make but sparing discoveries) there subsists a regular subordination among them ; and it can scarce be doubted, that this economy is necessary to all created, intelligent beings. God hath been pleased to make man *little lower than the angels* *, and it is more than probable, that the resemblance between the angelic and the human nature consists in this subordination, as well as in the faculty of reason, of which it appears to be the natural consequence ; and therefore the merely animal creation (for want of a sufficient degree of consciousness) is very little capable of government or social union. But whatever is the case of the higher or lower orders of beings, it is plainly necessary, that those of an

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intermediate nature, consisting of body and spirit, and endued with reason, appetite, and passions, should bind themselves by rules and laws, entrust the execution of them to some of their fellow creatures, and submit to controul in order to enjoy the common blessings of Providence with any tolerable advantage. This they do in a greater or less degree in proportion as government is more or less perfect. And from this constitution of our nature, the divine origin of it is deducible; which accordingly hath always taken place, even amongst the least improved part of our species, and where the knowledge of the true God hath been in a great measure obscured; and it is confirmed and established, and the rights of governors are fully ascertained by revelation.

Men being thus destined for social and civil life, they perceive it by the impulse of natural instinct, or, to speak more properly, the first spontaneous exertion of reason. Hence without doubt, in the earliest ages they naturally formed themselves into small communities, as the authority derived from our first parents was branched out and continued to the succeeding heads of families; 'till the circumstances of things made it expedient, or superior force obliged them, to unite into larger bodies, *when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam**. Hence the power of the whole was lodged in one or more hands, and a supreme authority was established in some part of the community.

As it is evident, that God intended government for the good of mankind, the more it conduces to that end, the more conformable it is to the divine Will. But, if we except the case of the Jewish commonwealth, which was instituted for higher than merely civil purposes, Providence (for any thing that appears to the contrary) leaves the settlement of states and framing laws to human prudence; in which view St. Peter calls all magistracy the *ordinance of man*†.

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* Deut. xxxii, 8.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13.

However there can be no doubt, but that governments are the peculiar care of Providence. The reason of things, the providential dispensations visible in the rise and progress, decay and downfall of empires, and the express declarations of scripture prove this truth. If our heavenly Father watches over every individual, inasmuch, *that the very hairs of their head are all numbered* § ; how much rather must his paternal regard be extended to communities, in whose welfare that of individuals is primarily founded? It is therefore his gracious purpose, that nations should flourish, unless when for sin he causes or permits their distress or desolation, either by the instrumentality of second causes, or extraordinary judgments.

Now as the only source of human happiness is the divine favour, God enjoins a strict obedience to his laws, as well for our own sakes, as because it is right and fit, and absolutely due. If men in all relations natural and civil, would constantly and conscientiously discharge their respective duties, it would produce a desirable face of things, and this transitory state would be sufficiently safe, comfortable and commodious. As governors and subjects constitute the essence of civil society, their duties are consequently of the highest importance and obligation; and tho' temporary motives may in some measure influence both to perform their part, yet nothing but a principle of religion is sufficient to produce this effect certainly, invariably and universally.

The text contains the motives of a subject's obedience, both prudential and religious. The apostle, having shewn the divine origin and benefits of government, draws this inference; *wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

- I. By wrath is meant all the means, that power gives to compel obedience, and it includes by parity of reason, a principle of interest.

1. Tho' governments may in some measure support themselves (and possibly have done so in some instances) by terror and awe, which is a very unhappy condition both to rulers and subjects, and the essence of tyranny and despotism; yet there is nothing to hinder men, on a supposition of their being free from the restraints of conscience, from attempting to overturn the government they live under, by force or treachery, whenever they may think it for their advantage, or are moved by ambition, ill-humour, or any irregular passion.
2. The motives of interest are still less efficacious and extensive. Public emoluments can be enjoyed but by few. If all, who are not withheld by mercenary considerations, think themselves at liberty to disturb the public tranquillity, the wildest confusion must ensue; and sure such a conduct is as unreasonable, as it is ungenerous and irreconcilable to a good conscience.

The apostle does not disallow these motives to obedience; they will, they may justly have their weight. The sword of the civil magistrate was intended to hang over and terrify the ill-disposed; and governors have a right to avail themselves of the favours and encouragements, of which they are the dispensers. Those, who do not *fear God*, may be induced by present rewards and punishments to *regard man*; they come in very properly as aids, and co-operate with a higher principle. But

- II. This is, what the apostle intended chiefly to fix our attention upon, as it not only influences the outward act, but extends to the inward disposition of the heart, and produces its effect at all times and in all circumstances. The welfare of society requires men to correct and regulate self-love, to set bounds to the desire of wealth, power, and pleasure, and to forego many gratifications. Tho' greater degrees of public good produce greater degrees of happiness to the generality of individuals, yet the public service may seem, or really be, inconsistent with some men's private and separate interests: in such a situation, what can make them prefer peace, and order, and justice, but a sense of religion?

religion? This is naturally productive of a temper of mind, that rejoices in the general happiness, and desires and endeavours to advance it, without regard to partial considerations. It makes men contented and easy in their respective stations, and act an inferior part with as much justness, care and complacency, as a superior: It makes them sensible of the beauty of regularity and discipline, and pay a willing, ready, and conscientious obedience to their governors; nor does it stop here, but carries them to make a sacrifice of life and fortune for the public good. Mankind is not so depraved, but that religion still preserves a general influence; it is a standing monitor, and secretly and powerfully restrains men from running into glaring and repeated enormities: and we may presume, it will always awe the bulk of mankind in the solemn invocation of the divine testimony (which is the greatest security, that can be taken of men's consciences) tho' we often see an oath too familiarly evaded by gross or by refined distinctions. To such a principle the welfare of society might be trusted, if mens passions and present temptations did not blind them to their true and final interest, and make other and more immediate restraints necessary for the preservation of peace and good order amongst them. We find therefore the fear of God and the honour of the king usually joined together in scripture, to which the wise man by a natural connexion, adds a caution against an unquiet and turbulent disposition. *My son, fear thou the lord and the king, and meddle not with them, that are given to change* †. Our Saviour unites these considerations, when upon occasion of a wicked combination to ensnare him, he delivered that weighty command, *render unto Cesar, the things which are Cesar's; and unto God the things, which are God's* ‡. And after their Lord's example, St. St. Paul and St. Peter || earnestly press the same duty, which is the highest and most momentous of all others, how much so-

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† Prov. xxiv. 21. ‡ Matt. xxii. 21. Mar. xii. 17. Lu. xx. 25. || Tit. iii. 1.
1 Pet. ii. 13.

ever persons of a factious spirit (than which there cannot be a greater pest of society) make light of, or overlook it. St. Paul, in the chapter now before us, fully sets forth the extent of, and all the motives to, this duty.

Let every soul, says he, *be subject to the higher powers* ; all inferiors are required to pay obedience to the supreme powers of the place, where they reside, and, as the reason of things and St. Peter's express precept shew, to all subordinate magistrates and superiors of every kind, under pain of the divine displeasure. *For there is no power, but of God* ; all authority is properly of divine appointment, whether supreme or subordinate, spiritual or temporal, public or domestic. *The powers, that be, are ordained of God* ; that is, God hath confirmed the governments of the earth in their hands, who in the course of his providence have obtained the possession of them ; the powers, whom we have acknowledged and who protect us, are the only powers, which we have any concern with ; and therefore no one can reasonably doubt where his allegiance is due, or think himself at liberty to disturb establishments, according to his own private inclination or affections.

In the same universal, unlimited manner, the other great duties of life are enjoined. *Children obey your parents in ALL THINGS* §. *Servants obey in ALL THINGS your masters according to the flesh* || ; and the same apostle speaking of another relation, says, *as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in EVERY THING* ‡.

He proceeds to deter subjects from disobedience by the danger of it. *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God*. This comprehends every instance of irregularity, and all crimes against the peace of the community, disrespectful behaviour to magistrates, abuse of their characters, misrepresentation and rash censure of their actions, unreasonable obstruction of their measures, faction and sedition, as well as taking

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up arms and open rebellion ; and they, that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. Those who understand this word as merely regarding temporal judgment, take it in much too confined a sense, nor does that interpretation prove the several acts of disobedience just mentioned, to be either less criminal in their own nature, or less hazardous in their consequences ; for present judgment is but a type and forerunner of future : and a moral precept does not bind the conscience less, because it is enforced with a temporary sanction, which only furnishes an immediate inducement to the practice of it. An unblameable, inoffensive deportment is the safest and wisest course, even with regard to those, who look no farther than the present life, as appears from the ends of government punishing the evil and rewarding the good, which the apostle offers next to our consideration.

St. Paul and St. Peter both suppose government to answer the ends, for which it was instituted : but admitting that the commands or laws of it are sometimes grievous, especially to particular persons, yet it is over-balanced with so many advantages, and so much greater evils would generally accrue to the public by resistance, than what are attempted to be removed, that subjects are obliged *for conscience towards God, to endure* very great inconveniencies. In recommending the duty of servants to masters, St. Peter teaches the former to be subject *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward* † ; and our apostle exhorts them *to be obedient—not answering again* §. And yet that the duty of subjection in the inferior relations admits certain limits, or, in other words, that mere arbitrary will is not binding in conscience, according to the true meaning of these general precepts, I think (whatever may be the judgment of others) very clear : and therefore, that to rest the measures of submission on their true basis, *commending it to every man's conscience*, is necessary to *sound doctrine*, and conduces most to the honour and safety of governors, to whom

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adulatory doctrines, however specious, are ensnaring and pernicious. In a government established on the principles of civil and religious liberty, they frequently *gender strifes*, and tend to alienate the minds of men from their allegiance. Such are the principles of our government; the advantages of which, and the duties resulting from them, are the proper subject of the present commemoration.

Now from the unlimited manner, in which obedience is enjoined to servants, children and wives (which is their rule in ordinary cases, and significative of the temper, they ought to cultivate) they are neither obliged to obey unjust, or even highly unreasonable commands; nor are they restrained from opposing or seeking redress for cruel, unnatural, and intolerable usage: and yet it is true in a moral sense (in which, according to the use and analogy of language, these precepts, and many others were wisely designed to be understood) I say, morally speaking, it is indisputable, that filial piety requires children to obey all the commands, and throw a veil over all the failings and faults of a parent---And so of the rest.---The scriptures for the most part contain only general rules of acting, but do not descend to particular cases; nor does this derogate from their perfection. It was neither needful, nor expedient to specify exceptions, or natural and moral incapacities, which disqualify men for the offices of life, since the particular occasion will always suggest them. Reason was bestowed upon us to be our director, and is one means, by which the divine will is communicated to us; it is therefore injudiciously set at variance with revelation. Tho' the *deep and secret things of God* relating to the divine nature and the redemption of mankind, could only be made known to us by express revelation, yet, in matters of practice, *the spirit of man*, or reason, tho' a weaker light, *is the candle or lamp of the Lord*. All the subtilty, with which some dispute against reason, will never persuade men, in contradiction to fact and experience, that there are not first principles of morality and religion,

gion, as well as of all other knowledge, to which the mind naturally hath recourse. Nothing is more certain than, that the fitness and relations of things are real; that the human mind is qualified to judge of them within its proper sphere; and that it is immediately conscious of the rectitude or depravity of actions. Tho' men, *not liking to retain God in their knowledge, some time gave themselves up to immorality and idolatry, and even justified perfidy and cruelty, they were always inexcusable* *. There can hardly be greater proofs of human depravity, and yet it is a melancholy truth, that some civilized and christian states (as they would be reckoned) have been not at all inferior to the most savage people, in avowing and deliberately putting in practice the most inhuman maxims. Even the Gentiles, whose ignorance seemed most invincible, were so far *a law unto themselves*, as to render their transgressions justly imputable; *their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts accusing, or else excusing one another* †. If then we consider man in his original and fallen state, the use of reason as a law is apparent, and likewise the necessity of divine instruction (besides other purposes) to confirm the dictates of conscience, and to renew and enforce authoritatively the law of nature *written in their hearts*; but much obliterated, as we learn from the apostle's account ‡, and too fatal experience, by their own wilful corruptions, which will always be found to have a malignant influence on the understanding. However the nature and extent of moral duties are still discoverable by the assistance and right use of reason, tho' a principle of religion only can advance them to the dignity of christian graces. We are therefore left throughout the scripture to collect and infer the limitations and restrictions of the several precepts and promises contained in it, however absolutely expressed, where they are necessarily implied. It is an uncontested rule in interpreting the sacred as well as all other writings, that the scope of the argument and the subject matter of the discourse fix and li-

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* Rom. i.

† Rom. ii. 14, 15.

‡ Rom. i.

Eph. iv.

mit the meaning of the most seemingly universal propositions; and if we quit the path of reason and common sense, we shall deviate into the most gloomy enthusiasm, and the affairs of life must either be at a stand, or most extravagantly conducted; of this there are many and obvious instances.

With regard to the duty of subjects, the natural and antecedent rights of men, which are unalienable, are essential limitations; nor are the constitutional privileges peculiar to particular nations by the law of reason and religion less inviolable.

1. That the end of government is the public good, and that men were not designed to be slaves, are first and self-evident truths, which point out the measures of submission. When protection ceases, and government is perverted to the purposes of oppression and destruction, the end of it is defeated, and self-preservation, which is the first law of nature to sensible beings, must take place in so unfortunate and desperate a state of affairs. It is not lawful in any case to do *evil, that good may come* §; but necessary self-defence, tho' a natural, is not a moral evil; for no power can give a right to govern without any obligation to consult the good of the governed.

The origin of government, as derived from parental authority, is so far from countenancing a claim to unlimited power, that it contains an express argument against it: neither is there occasion always to suppose an explicit, original compact between governors and subjects; tho' it must have actually existed in many cases, is necessarily implied in all, and immediately results from the nature and end of civil government, and the mutual obligation, both parties are under, to fulfil the duties of the relation, they stand in to each other. It is not disputed, that, if a state is reduced to extremity by profligate citizens, recourse may lawfully be had to extraordinary remedies to prevent the ruin, that threatens it. The danger may likewise proceed from abuse of power, and mankind would be hardly dealt with, if in
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such conjunctures of extraordinary danger the people had no right to interpose for the preservation of the commonweal.

2. The constitutional privileges of each nation are likewise sacred: to mention only one instance in our own (where the king is supreme, but not despotic,) the power of making laws, which is the highest act of government, was always lodged in a legislative body consisting of distinct members; and therefore for any one solely to assume the power of dispensing with, suspending or enjoining laws, is a subversion of the constitution.

But the ill-affected or ambitious may make liberty a pretence for disturbing their rulers.—It must be confessed, that all free-agency is liable to misapplication, but it is not therefore less valuable. As truth must ever agree with itself, so all things that are right and fit, must be perfectly consistent with each other. If liberty and loyalty are both good in their own nature, and agreeable to the reason of things, they can be no more repugnant within their proper limits, than justice and mercy, and many demonstrable truths practical and speculative, which to some apprehensions seem not easily reconcileable. Conscience only can set bounds to the furious waves of mens passions; to this we must trust, whatever principles we adopt; and where it is found, it will produce not only more passive, but more active obedience, than the highest advocates for absolute power have generally chose to practice.

Again, tyrannical governments, it is said, are judgments from heaven, and must be submitted to like pestilence, famine, and other visitations.—Patience and resignation under incurable evils are certainly indispensable duties; but this does not set aside the lawfulness of remedies, where providence has afforded them.

Thus the case stands with regard to right; and if we consider it with regard to fact, it will be hard to find, for what age, country or family, indefeasible power was intended; no family of this nation since the arrival of our Saxon ancestors can make out a claim to it: and what is naturally impracticable (as

it is for collective bodies passively and *perpetually* to give up their lives and fortunes to the disposal of arbitrary will and pleasure) cannot be the foundation of a right.

The means, by which providence brings about revolutions in states, must necessarily be by the secret guidance of second causes, or by the passions and devices of men, which may be directed to good or bad ends, and are often unlawful with regard to the actors, and subject them to the divine wrath and the condemnation denounced by the apostle. God, who by ways unsearchable to us knows how to bring good out of evil without interrupting the liberty of moral agents, has frequently made, what was at first the great misfortune of nations, afterwards to produce their greatest happiness. But providence more signally interposes in events conducted with national unanimity, and the concurrence of all orders and estates for the preservation of all, that is valuable and dear to men. As no one case perhaps since the foundation of the world is, or can be, exactly similar to another, each must stand or fall by its own intrinsic merit. No establishment had ever more evident marks of providential interposition in surmounting all tyrannous opposition, was planned more conformably to all laws divine and human, or had a clearer divine right, than our own.

Christianity then leaves mens temporal rights, as it found them. Our Lord declared, that he came not to be *a judge or a divider over men* *; nor is it the genius of his religion to mould states, or prescribe forms of government, but to give rules suited to all climates and ages. It is no more an enemy to civil, than to religious liberty, tho' it has been represented as such to both; and the ill-wishers to it are ready to admit every imputation; but it strictly forbids every kind of licentiousness. St. Peter, speaking of subjection to governors, enjoins christians to consider themselves *as free, and not using their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness* †. From the several passages in scripture relating to religious freedom, some enthusiasts took occasion to throw off all civil

* Luke xii. 14.

† 1 Pet. ii. 16.

civil and moral restraints. Others with no better foundation from the general precepts of obedience (either thro' flattery, or that they might have a share in the tyranny, which they supported, and sometimes with a better meaning) have maintained the most unlimited claims of rulers, allowing subjects no remedy under any circumstances of oppression: but our holy religion and the good of society are no way incompatible; nor do *they* do justice or service to it, who represent it as tending to establish arbitrary power and absolute monarchies, and fix and perpetuate slavery; neither do they act more agreeably to the true spirit of the church of England, and the constitution of their country: they profess to see no difference between resisting in cases of extremity for self-defence, and resisting in every case; and they may too perhaps with the Stoics think all offences equal. People, who run into the extremes of slavish or licentious principles, charge each other with difficulties, whether with equal reason is not material, because extremes are always to be suspected: it is observable, that if either side are pressed with consequences, they are apt to evade or disclaim them; in this, as in most cases, the truth lies in the medium; and, thank God, we want neither reason nor conscience to find and fix us in it. There is a virtual agreement between men of a right judgment, and they need only explain their sentiments to perceive it. It is very providential, that the most useful and practical truths for ordinary occasions (and as to extraordinary they speak for themselves) are evident to all capacities. Thus the plainest man, if he reflects at all, cannot but see the benefit of government, and the obligation, it lays him under, and must acknowledge the force of each branch of the apostle's argument for obedience.

1. The vindictive part of the magistrate's office is a common benefit to every member of society, and besides operating upon the dispositions of those, who are actuated by no better principles, should engage all, who have a sense of gratitude, religiously to support the authority of government; for without the execution of
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the laws upon evil-doers men could not venture to live together, nor trust each other ; every one must be upon his guard against all others, they would be reduced to a savage or brutal state of war, and their best, their only resource perhaps would be a desert : and how wretched a condition must that be to a being so apparently formed for society, that he is almost of all animals the least capable of subsistence or self-defence by his personal endowments, and the most helpless and degenerate without care, culture, and education !

2. The other part of the apostle's argument for conscientious obedience to magistrates is founded in the positive good, we enjoy by them. The two grand hinges of government are rewards and punishments ; and there is a sure way of attaining the former, continues our apostle. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? Do that, which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* Now as no government can possibly bestow actual rewards, or even commendations upon all, or the greatest part of, the worthy and well-deserving ; these and the like expressions must signify the general advantages, of which all are part-takers. The lowest member of society, that is not extremely vicious or unfortunate, is provided with infinitely better accommodations, than he could procure in a solitary state. To government we owe the necessaries, the comforts, and the elegancies of life, the invention and perfecting of arts and sciences, the advancement of knowledge and improvement in virtue. For tho' vice has always had a considerable sway in powerful and polite kingdoms, and the arts of refinement are too often unhappily made subservient to it ; yet this is an abuse of them contrary to better knowledge, as the duties of life are more studied and understood in such places, especially where pure religion is professed. But in savage countries, where government is still imperfect, and ignorance prevails, the manners of the people are indecent, brutal, and inhuman, of which we have too many affecting proofs in the barbarity exercised on our fellow subjects at a distance.

To government we owe the mutual participation of the advantages of other men and countries; by it inconveniencies are remedied, blessings diffused, and we are defended from foreign and domestic violence. The protection then, which every man enjoys, that *leads a quiet and peaceable life**, and the secure possession of the fruit of his industry, are an ample reward to him; and the good name, and reputation, and fair esteem, which result from just and honest dealing, are his praise.

As the best things by abuse become the most noxious, it may admit of a question, whether the worst government or none at all is the greatest evil. But we are by no means concerned in the decision of it, since mankind in general are not reduced to so hard an alternative. However it is observable, that the former is so insupportable to human nature, that it naturally leads to the other, and tyranny and anarchy succeed each other by turns; which has been the unhappy lot of that part of the globe, where pure despotism prevails. But leaving the consideration of cruel and oppressive tyranny (which is in no better sense the power, than the violence of robbers) the established power of any country *is the minister of God for good*, and entitled to all due respect and obedience, as both prophets and apostles have determined; tho' being left to man's contrivance it must partake of the condition of humanity, and may be more or less perfect: few are so ill constituted, as not to put men in a much better situation, than that, which is improperly called a state of nature; for subordination and society are the natural state of man: but superior advantages are an additional obligation to obedience. An excellent *civil* and *ecclesiastical* constitution is a happiness, we enjoy, perhaps beyond comparison, above other people.

1. Tho' in the vast and complex machine of government many nicer movements must be imperceptible to common eyes, and may seem, or actually be out of order; yet we cannot but perceive,

ceive, that the principal parts are well regulated and contrived to produce public and private happiness. The mixed form of our government gives constitutional vigour to the whole, and in a great measure secures to us the peculiar advantages, and exempts us from the inconveniencies of other forms. Laws, to which we give our consent--trials by our equals---independent judges--that singular guard and fence of liberty, which prevents the detaining mens persons on state pretences, and can only be suspended by an act of the legislature, when they think it requisite for the public safety--a liberty of speaking and writing accountable only to the laws--are our envied privileges, and shew our happiness not only above those nations, who have lost, but those likewise, who in some degree retain their liberty; and we may ask our fellow subjects, who undervalue their own government, whether there is any other, for which they would desire to exchange it? and possibly upon the whole (for we are not to expect perfection in human things) a better constitution could not have been contrived, to keep within due bounds the power of the prince on one hand, and liberty of the people on the other.

To which I must add the manner of our contributing to its support, as the people's duty in this respect makes a necessary part of my subject. Indeed this is so essential to the public service and the very being of society, that the law of nature dictates the necessity of it, and St. Paul concludes his exhortation with it. *For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing.* To expect to partake of the benefit, without bearing our proportion of the expence necessary for maintaining the dignity of government, and for carrying on its measures (which are our own concern) is not only unreasonable, but chimerical. There is no portion of our substance so advantageously disposed of; which should induce us to part with it willingly: but since few are so disinterested, and as it is too natural to desire the advantages of society, without shar-

ing in the burthen of it: the apostle rightly considers it as a debt, and goes on to enjoin it as such. *Render to all their dues; tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom.* If we could know, what the exigencies of the state require, it should make us supply them without reluctance at least; and it may be worth considering, how far we *have* that advantage. In most countries the people must confide wholly in their governors, as to the quantity of the payment and the application of it: with us both are settled on mature deliberation by our representatives. This is what we understand by our own consent; and it is in most cases so as delegated to them, even tho' they differ from us in judgment: their intention seems to have been, however they may have succeeded, to place the necessary burthen as equally and equitably as possible. If notwithstanding we hear frequent complaints of numerous taxes and a heavy public debt, they ought in a great measure to be ascribed to a series of unavoidable events, such as the injustice of foreign enemies, and treasons and rebellions at home, which no human prudence could prevent. How far it is practicable by prudential regulations, to increase the public revenue with little more inconvenience to the useful members of the community, is a consideration, that does not belong to our province, which only obliges us to inculcate from scripture this indispensable branch of the duty of subjects: however I am persuaded, that there is no Briton, who will not readily acquiesce under an additional expence, rather than suffer his country to be reduced to the terms of our encroaching adversaries, the burthen of which, we may hope without presumption to be able to support as long, as they can; and I may venture to affirm, that our condition is still more flourishing, and in consequence of it our public credit higher, than that of any other nation.

The effects of a mild and free government are visible in the number, opulence and industry of the people, the extension of commerce, the improvement of manufactures, and the consequential increase and sumptuousness of buildings, especially in

the capital and all commercial and industrious towns ; whose riches circulate to remoter parts, and would more, if these were made more accessible. *We have built goodly houses and dwelt therein, according to Moses's description of national prosperity, our flocks and our herds multiply, and our silver and our gold is multiplied, and all that we have is multiplied**; and our foundations of charity, and works of magnificence, and public convenience, do honour to the nation : not that it is to be imagined, that we are arrived, or perhaps ever can, at the height of national improvements. Much employment for public spirit yet remains, and many obstacles from prejudice and self-interest are to be surmounted. Our unhappy divisions have possibly obstructed many designs for the public good ; and probably this bad effect will always in some degree be the consequence of the blessing of liberty. But tho' we cannot expect, there should be *no complaining in our streets*, we may truly say, *happy are the people, that are in such a case*, as to external goods ; yea, infinitely more blessed still would our condition be, if *the abundance of all things*, as it in reason ought, should impress upon us that lesson, which the great Jewish law-giver drew from this consideration for the instruction of God's people, *thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he, that giveth thee power to get wealth*†. But here we must reflect with shame and remorse, and self-condemnation, how greatly we have failed.

Tho' I am far from thinking so ill of mankind, or of our own age and country, as some do, yet, to speak truly of them, there is but too much need of amendment. Men are of a mixed nature, and often inconsistent with themselves ; they have generally some virtues to atone for and qualify their vices and infirmities, and few, it is to be hoped, are lost to all principle. But without comparing times, or enquiring, whether there are many or few righteous, every one has a care of his own, and should consider seriously, how little in all probability he is advanced in a reli-

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* Deut. viii. 12.

† Ibid. ver. 18.

gious life, and for the public good reform himself, as sin always hath been the destruction of states, and always will sap and sink their foundation. All, who are justly chargeable with the vices, with too much reason complained of amongst us, such as luxury, intemperance, sensuality, immoderate love of pleasure, the ruinous vice of gaming, profanation of oaths, infidelity, and the like works of the flesh, are in a deplorable and desperate state with regard to their own spiritual concerns, and likewise so far enemies to their country, and bad subjects. Many of these are the ungrateful abuse of that plenty, with which God hath blessed us; a vice, to which his chosen people were extremely prone. *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked* *. The truest instance then of the love of our country is, to forsake and discourage wickedness and to maintain good discipline in our respective stations, whose nature it is to incorporate, as it were, and assimilate all, who live under it; and then we need not care, how many are admitted to our privileges. We have excellent laws, nothing can contribute so much to our happiness, as a due observance of them; without this the purity of our religious establishment, which is the other blessing, that requires our pious acknowledgment, will avail us little.

2. Besides the corruptions in doctrine and worship inseparably attached to the see of Rome, the tyranny of popery over mens consciences was a yoke, *which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*. Uncharitableness is the characteristic of that church, inasmuch that they treat those of their own communion, who disavow it, as ignorant of the very elements of religion, which requires wholesome severities in compassion to mens souls. Whatever regard therefore we may have for individuals of that persuasion, who may be better than their principles, can we entertain a favourable opinion of their church? Uncharitableness hath of all errors the least pretence to the plea of innocence. No erroneous judgment or misguided understanding can excuse cruelty and persecution, which are im-

moral and impious practices. There are too many undeniable proofs, that popery hath not changed its nature. Here it may affect to put on a milder appearance, which yet it can hardly preserve. Tho' curbed by restraining laws, which self-preservation hath made necessary, and indulged by the respite of them, it from time to time breaks forth and discovers, *what manner of spirit it is of*; abroad it has never ceased raging. We have been reminded from the imperial seat of that church of the beauty of persecution: may none, who call themselves protestant, ever be captivated with the charms of it. Can it then be justifiable on any supposition to risk our matchless constitution by trusting such a savage nature and giving it a chance to establish itself in time, if not at first? That popery is an essential disqualification for the throne of these kingdoms, is a fundamental part of our constitution, if we are to continue protestant. The freedom from this intolerable servitude, strengthens every motive of obedience to the present government, which like all other duties must be shewn by the inward affection of the mind and a suitable outward demeanour.

1. Every considerate and conscientious person will take care, that his heart accompanies his lips, when he enters into engagements. This is necessary to a man's own peace, makes duty a delight, and gives a benevolent turn to the temper. Our disposition with regard to a cause is rightly expressed by affection or disaffection. Our affections are engaged, before reason comes in. Even virtue and religion have, or should have, the prejudices of education on their side; they are unavoidable in the nature of things, and therefore not blameable. The only inference, we can draw from hence, is, that we ought carefully to try and examine them; and where we find, they have been misplaced (and great allowances should be made for early impressions) it is no disgrace, it is a credit to a man to recede from an error for the sake of a good conscience. We find perhaps from ourselves, at least we acknowledge from the experience, we have of others, that
men.

men part with them reluctantly, and (tho' when repugnant to duty no very valuable inheritance) look upon them as part of their patrimony. They are favourites nursed by pride, kept alive by false honour and false shame, and supported by multitudes. Now tho' it may require no small degree of courage and discernment and good temper to break thro' all these, yet it is worth some pains to reconcile duty and affection.

2. When these are at variance, the mind is in no very easy situation, and naturally vents itself in *bitterness and wrath---and clamour---and evil speaking---with all malice* †. Nothing can be more undesirable than a state of perpetual dissatisfaction and discontent, or more illiberal than a habit of railing---for things, which being fixed by Providence are out of man's power---against the highest and most respectable characters---perhaps the wisest and best of men---at least persons, whose dispositions and designs we know nothing of. Such a practice, tho' it does not proceed to direct action, to which however it naturally tends, is scarce more innocent or less pernicious. Shimei affords a memorable instance of this, who, not being able to brook David's advancement by God to the throne of Israel to the exclusion of the house of Saul, indulged his malevolent disposition in the bitterest expressions, *and cursed, and threw stones, and cast dust* †. I do not mean to discommend a sober and temperate freedom of speech, or to derogate from the right of private judgment, which is the only criterion in every man's own breast, as far as he is a competent and impartial judge, both of private actions and public measures; and to oppose such of the latter as a person thinks wrong in a legal and regular way, and with an intent not to clog, but to aid and facilitate the wheels of good government, is just and essential to liberty: but lightly to *speak evil of dignities* is a highly criminal practice reserved, we know, *unto the day of judgment to be punished* ‥, and contrary to *pure religion*, which prescribes a reverence of authority, and a general
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† Eph. iv. 31.

‡ 2 Sam. xvi. 5—13.

‖ Jude.

presumption in favour of governors on account of the usefulness, difficulty and dignity of their office.

The seeds of this and every duty are best implanted in the early part of life. The first occasions of exercising it are towards parents; and towards pastors and masters, whom the new testament speaks of as one sort of rulers †. It is a happy preface, when obedience is exerted in these domestic and private relations. Submission to discipline is the ornament and glory of youth, and so far from servile, that it is a sign of the most free and generous disposition, and will accompany them and give a propriety of behaviour thro' every relation of life. The credit of a place of education like this will in some degree be affected by the conduct of those, who receive their instruction in it. That a few spots should be found in the fairest body is not very surprising; it is more so, considering the nature and end of the institution, and the services derived from it to religion and learning, that it should have any enemies or hard judges. But they are chiefly such, as are no well wishers to either. *They* likewise, who by transgressing the bounds of regularity, sobriety and good order, give *occasion* of censure to them, which *desire occasion*, are so far enemies to the university, and in a still greater degree, if they call themselves friends, and appropriate to themselves that venerable name, thereby offering a great indignity, where they owe the warmest affection, gratitude and filial regard. The exceptionable behaviour even of a single person is sufficient to bring undeserved imputations on our discipline. But nothing of this sort will adhere, if those, who are placed under it, are disposed to obey in all things their worthy magistrates, governors and instructors, who are entitled to the utmost compliance, respect and deference by the apostolical injunctions; and who, being highly sensible themselves of, what is due to authority, (in which they justly claim an interest) earnestly desire, that these seminaries may produce the most illustrious examples of

† Theff. v. 12, Heb. xiii. 17,

of affection to that establishment, to which they are indebted for the very being of the church of England, and the preservation of their rights and privileges ; which were once the grand obstacles to the success, and first objects of the resentment, of arbitrary counsels. Since which *perilous time* we have been blessed with a succession of excellent protestant princes, defenders of our truly evangelical church, favourers and benefactors to these learned and religious foundations.

Gratitude for these particular blessings of Providence amongst others is with reason expected of us, and therefore *giving of thanks—for kings and for all, that are in authority* †, is enjoined us as a necessary return for the benefits of government. His majesty's happy accession to the throne of these kingdoms, as on this day, is an instance of the continued goodness of Providence to us. A long and gracious reign hath given us full experience of the personal and royal virtues of our sovereign—his integrity, magnanimity, love of justice, and uniform adherence to the laws of the land and the maxims of our constitution. I need not in the present critical conjuncture remind you of any other instance of his paternal concern for the public good (which constitutes the true princely character) than his unwearied endeavours by preventive measures to preserve; and when they were ineffectual, by more vigorous ones to defend, the undoubted rights of his crown and kingdom. A portion of health and strength beyond most of a like age give us reasonable hopes, that he may long continue to *see his childrens children*, and (if it be the divine will) *peace restored upon Israel*: and we may justly congratulate our country on the prospect of the perpetuity of our happiness from the virtues of his royal descendants. Considered as a father of a family, he must be pronounced fortunate.—Gratitude will not let us forget our obligations to a prince, whose bravery preserved the constitution from its rebellious enemies.—Nor were ever the nation's expectations more justly raised than

† 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

than by the early demonstrations of the good heart and solid judgment of that amiable prince, whose worthy natural disposition hath been seconded by the highest domestic advantages ; who hath been formed by the example of a father zealous for our constitution, whose memory will always be esteemed, and the prudent instructions of a virtuous and accomplished mother. These considerations justly endear to us a family, which is the strength and support of the protestant cause.

The returns of duty, confidence and affection in the people were never more conspicuous, they having in all trying circumstances made their sovereign's cause their own, and lately expressed a proper resentment of the indignity offered to him by a restless and implacable enemy. Prejudices against other nations or in favour of our own may easily be carried too far. National reflexions should never be indulged beyond the bounds of strict truth. That we have great faults and *have not obeyed, as we ought, the voice of the Lord our God*, I fear, is too notorious. But I hope, we are justly in possession of, and shall preserve a national character of good faith ; a plain proof of which, I think, is, that our neighbours are so far from apprehending any danger to their liberties from us, that they look upon us as guardians to them. We may leave the issue to the opinion of the world with regard to our antient enemy and rival, whom an insatiable thirst after dominion seems to have rendered universally distrusted. They are an active, and we must acknowledge a sagacious and powerful people. It is therefore utterly inconsistent with prudence to omit taking all necessary precautions for our defence and security against such dangerous and vigilant enemies, tho' I trust, we shall not be in any respect unequal to them, if we improve the advantages, that Providence hath put into our hands by a seasonable exertion of our natural and constitutional strength. Yet we ought not,—the peaceable spirit of our religion will not allow us, to be dis-inclined to a reconciliation, whenever they shall cease *to deal treacherously*. The sword is drawn—God

knows,

knows, who may live to see it sheathed! War however just and necessary is a sore calamity and tremendous appeal to the dread Sovereign of the universe. Tho' we have great reason humbly to hope for success from the goodness of our cause, yet for many wise reasons unknown to us, or for the chastisement of our known sins, the event may possibly be unfavourable. *But if the Lord is on our side, when men rise up against us, they will not be able to swallow us up quick, when their wrath is kindled against us.* Therefore all boasting and presumption are as unbecoming, as courage and resolution and spirit are seasonable. Such the nation hath shewn. We have seen a generous ardor run thro' all ranks and orders of men to unite, and associate, and risk their lives and fortunes in defence of their king and country. Such a testimony of public spirit and loyalty must silence disaffection, if any remains; happy would it be, if from this and every opportunity we would take occasion to cultivate (as far as human frailty will permit) the amiable spirit of unanimity and a reverential regard of authority, the contempt of which, whatever was the case of former times, seems justly laid to the charge of the present, and ought for the most weighty reasons to be guarded against, since the encouragers of it can neither be religious men, nor friends to mankind, nor to liberty. It is a much more *joyful and pleasant thing to be thankful* for the blessings, we enjoy (which are really inestimable) under the best government and best of kings. A lively sense of our duty to God will make us good subjects to that government, which affords us every kind of protection. Thus we shall discharge our part towards promoting universally the happiness of this world, and secure to ourselves the reward of an eternal inheritance in the next. *Whatsoever therefore ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men* †.

† Col. iii. 23.

